

Washington, DC (December 13, 2011) – As Republicans in Congress work to reign in Washington's out-of-control spending, one area that must be scrutinized is foreign aid, especially to countries such as Egypt that are oppressing religious minorities.

Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL-09) is calling on the House Appropriations Committee to place conditions on the \$1.3 billion in annual aid the United States provides Egypt because it is being used by the Egyptian military to persecute and attack Coptic Christians and other religious minorities. [Read the letter Bilirakis submitted here](#)

"Americans should be alarmed, especially during dire fiscal times, that our taxpayer dollars are being used by the Egyptian military as a means to violate human rights," Bilirakis said.

Bilirakis, a member of the Middle East and South Asia Subcommittee as well as International Religious Freedom Caucus, has been a consistent voice in support of human rights for oppressed religious minorities, particularly Coptic Christians in Egypt.

Numerous incidents in recent months have shown the need for conditions on aid to Egypt. Thousands of Coptic Christians have peacefully taken to the streets of Cairo to protest the government's failure to protect against attacks on their churches. However, the demonstrations turned violent after the military plowed through the crowds and fired on civilians killing dozens and injuring hundreds. To date, no known action has been taken against the military.

Placing conditions on the aid would incentivize peaceful and democratic change in Egypt, and would pose serious consequences for continued violations of basic political and human rights.